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NATURE'S HEART ✓

A Patriotic Photo-Play.

✓  
Scenario and Arrangement

by

E.M. Robinson ✓

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Produced by the Commonwealth Cinema Corporation. ✓

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NATURE'S HEART

A Patriotic Photo-Play.

Scenario and Arrangement

by

R.M. Robinson

Produced by the Commonwealth Cinema Corporation.

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JUN 27 1921



## NATURE'S HEART

### Description:

Nature's Heart is a patriotic photo-play based on local history. The action takes place in Lawrence, Mass., the busy industrial, cosmopolitan city. The main action centers about the Bodwell Elm, planted in 1729 on the day of the birth of the first son in the Bodwell family dwelling in the house now standing on the old site.

The theme is Americanism, loyalty to American ideals, wrought through the education of an Italian girl in our public schools. A romance between the son of the present bearer of the Bodwell name, and Elvira Pitochelli, the daughter of the present owner of the Bodwell estate, furnishes the human side of the plot. The dénouement is happy in accord with the lesson taught through all the years by the old elm, the oldest Resident, as expressed in the poem by Emily G. Wetherbee from which the title was taken:

"How good and true the lesson that it teaches  
Of faith and hope and love;  
That Nature's Heart in its eternal goodness,  
Is tuned to that above."

Scenario and arrangement by

E.M. Robinson,

53 Belmont St., Lawrence, Mass.

Photography by the Commonwealth Cinema Corporation, Boston, Mass.

1.

NATURE'S HEART

A more detailed description.

The Bodwell Elm, a fine example of that typically American tree, has stood for almost two centuries in front of the Bodwell "mansion", a fine old New England Colonial house, built in 1720. In 1921 the onward march of progress in the now busy industrial city leads the present owner, Sabatino Pitochelli, to decide to have the old house torn down, and a modern apartment house built on the site. This would necessitate cutting down the old elm which has stood like a sentinel through all the devious changes of the past.

Charles S. Bodwell and his sons arrive at the Bodwell estate. They have recently returned from the West. It is the children's first visit to the old homestead. Mr. Bodwell seated beneath the old elm, relates to the children the story of the past. This "story" is acted in seven scenes as follows:

(1) A friendly Indian plants a young elm, on the day of the birth of the first Bodwell son, July 26, 1729.

(2) A lovely bride comes out of the front door. She is dressed in old fashioned costume and carries a big nosegay.

(3) An old lady sits winding yarn on "swifts".

(4) Major Bodwell has a furlough.

(5) The stately minuet.

(6) "Home they brought her warrior dead" (Tennyson)

(7) Childhood's lovely grace.  
Bethia Bodwell and her little playmate, *Percie*.



Fairies grouped about the old Bodwell Elm, waken, stretch, and begin to hop about. One says: "The leaves of the old elm were trembling in the night- a bad omen." The fairies tremble. An Eavesdropper listening to their troubled conversation tells them that he knows what it means, because he had heard two men (the owner and the Superintendent of Public Property) talking the day before. When the fairies hear that the man wants to have the old tree cut down they clench their little fists and murmur threats. Suddenly, Dawn, as the Fairy Queen, appears, listens to their troubled tales, then announces her presence by her wand, and bids them remember the lesson that the old tree teaches of faith and hope and love.

She comforts them, dances for them and they trip away after her to the land of the fleecy clouds.

The other scenes are at "Belle Villa", the present home of the Pitochellis, and at "Forest Gate", the present home of the Bodwells, recently returned from the West.

Elvira Pitochelli, the daughter of the present owner, is a senior in the High School. She is seen starting out for school with girl friends; her brother Enrico is heartily greeted by schoolboys who call for him on their way to school.

Mr. Pitochelli himself, comes out on a terrace and raises the American flag to which a younger son gives the salute. He then starts off for work. Later, he is seen looking over accounts. He comes across the Bodwell investment. His manner shows that it is clearly not a paying investment. He calls up the Public Property Department and arranges to meet

the Superintendent at the old elm. There he sets forth his plans. The commissioner, born within five hundred yards of the old elm argues with him, and tells him that it would be a sacrilege to cut down this tree, the finest old American in the city. He withholds the permission requested (to send men to cut it down). He also takes steps to give publicity to the matter. The editor of a local paper gives it publicity through his editorial column.

The news soon spreads among the citizens. In school, pupils look askance at Elvira and her brother. They return home from school, dejected, realizing that if their father insists on carrying out his plans this act will end the friendly relations existing between them and the native Americans.

Elvira pleads with her father not to carry out his plans. He is a practical business man, however, and refuses to listen to her.

Deep in her heart is a secret - her love for Henry Bodwell, the oldest son of Charles Bodwell, the oldest son of Charles S. Bodwell. She goes to her room, sits dejected before her desk. After a few moments, she picks up a photo on her desk. She kisses it, then writes a note to Henry, telling him she hopes to find a way to show her father how dear the tree is to the natives, and to many of the children of foreign parents in this cosmopolitan city. She hopes in this way, "to stay the execution".

She has a vision of the school children paying tribute to "the old resident". She goes to the Superintendent of



Schools, and tells him of it. As a result of this "vision" ten thousand school children make a pilgrimage to the old elm. They sing "America the Beautiful", lay garlands at its feet, recite poems about it and give the salute to the flag which is prominent in every group.

Mr. Pitochelli is an interested spectator. Overcome by the tide of sentiment attached to the old elm, and the display of patriotism among the children, many of whom are of foreign parentage - Syrian, Armenian, Polish, Italian, French, Portuguese - he offers to sell the estate to the city for \$10,000, provided it shall be forever and at all times used for some civic purpose. The offer is a generous one, and is accepted readily. Subscriptions begin and School children raise thousands of dollars towards it. Interest is aroused, and the desired amount is raised.

Henry Bodwell, hearing how his sweetheart's vision has saved his ancestral estate, comes home from college to thank her, and to ask her to honor them by bearing the family name. Mrs. Bodwell, at first, displeased with her son's attentions to this "foreigner", has only to see her to yield to her charm.

An engagement party follows. The happy fiancée steals away with her lover to the old elm. There beneath the same old branches that had sheltered so many of his ancestors, he tells her, once again the old, sweet, story. So love's circle is unbroken, and the lesson that the old tree teaches is proven once again.

5.

"How good and true the lesson that it teaches,  
Of faith, and hope, and love;  
That Nature's Heart, in its eternal goodness  
Is tuned to that above."

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Scenario and arrangement by E.M. Robinson,  
53 Belmont St.,  
Lawrence, Mass.

Photography by Commonwealth Cinema Corporation,  
Boston, Mass.



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